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THOUGHTS
ON THE NATURE OF
TRUE DEVOTION,
WITH
REFLECTIONS
ON THE
L A T E F A S T.

ADDRESSED TO THE BRITISH NATION.

THIS PEOPLE DRAW NEAR ME WITH THEIR MOUTH, AND
WITH THEIR LIPS DO HONOUR ME, BUT HAVE REMOVED
THEIR HEARTS FAR FROM ME, AND THEIR FEAR TOWARDS
ME IS TAUGHT BY THE PRECEPT OF MEN. ISAIAH.

C A M B R I D G E :

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PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE.

FIRST, *The nature of true Devotion; for we have been called upon devoutly to pray to God.*

SECONDLY, *The nature of a national fast, and how far it is in general consistent with true devotion; and*

THIRDLY, *How far the late fast in particular, considering its circumstances, may be consistent with such devotion.*

True devotion, then, I conceive to relate equally to our conduct towards God, and towards our neighbour. It does not consist in praying to the Almighty regularly at stated times, and in stated forms; but in forming our minds to a constant and serious attention to, and practice of, the great and sublime duties of religion and virtue. It is not to be found in the transient effusions of a heated imagination, but in an unvaried and habitual subjection of
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our passions to the sway of reason; in the pure emotions of the heart created by an awful sense of our dependance upon, and obligations to, the greatest and best of beings; in a constant and solemn adoration of his infinite perfections; in an ardent love of his unbounded goodness to mankind; in a strict conformity to his holy will, and immutable laws; and in a patient resignation to all the dispensations of his providence, whether to our narrow understandings they appear to be for our happiness or not: our prayers should therefore be short, and general, all concluding with—"thy will, O God, be done!"—Our thanksgivings should be *constant* in our hearts, where they are witnessed by God alone, and frequently and fervently expressed before men. True devotion will enable us in all our troubles to rely for consolation entirely on the glorious prospect vouchsafed us, of a future and better state of existence, where the righteous shall

know no more sorrow, but live in perfect peace, and never ending happiness.

With regard to our neighbour, true devotion consists in cultivating an unbounded love and benevolence toward our fellow-creatures, regarding them *all* as children of the same family with ourselves. It not only prevents our harbouring any malice or ill-will to any one either *nationally* or *individually*; but impels us, as we may have opportunity, to do good to *all*, without considering what their opinions or persuasions may be. Or, to sum up all in one short sentence, which contains the most important lesson that can be given of the duty of man, to man, "to do to others as we would they should do unto us."

True devotion then cannot come and go by *fits and starts*; it must be *constant*, or it is nothing. It cannot be *excited* by Gothic pillars and arches,

" By

" By storied windows richly dight,

" Casting a dim religious light;

" By the peeling organ's blow,

" Or the full voic'd choir below."

It cannot be excited by the elevation of the host, as in the ceremonials of the Romish church; by the thousand lights which blaze around their altars and domes, nor by all the relics with which they are decorated. It cannot be *excited* by the solemnity with which the English Priest or Bishop presents to us the memorials of the death of the great and blessed founder of the Christian faith; and still less can it be *excited* by our rulers calling upon us to be devout. True devotion will indeed lead us to attend duly upon the public worship of God, in such a way as our consciences best approve; but if we do not carry devotion *with us* to the place of worship, we shall scarcely find it waiting there to receive us. True devotion (it is evident, that

that in this instance, I am speaking of Christian devotion only) will lead us to attend the solemn commemoration of the death of our blessed Master; but it will lead us to consider it in no other light than as a *memorial* of that event; not as a rite, the observance of which is to atone for any sins or errors which we have committed, or which is to give us a licence to sin with impunity for the future. In short, the sum of true devotion is, to live in a constant and conscientious practice of whatever is right, and a constant *abstemiousness* from whatever is wrong, as far as is in our power from the circumstances in which we are placed in the world, (farther, a just and merciful being will not require of us) cheerfully enjoying that portion of good things which God has been pleased to allot us, without wishing for those which he has placed out of our reach. One who pursues such a course of life, and such an one only, I will venture to pronounce can be *truly devout*.

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Let us now consider, *SECONDLY*, *The nature of a national fast*; I mean as it is observed in this kingdom, and how far it is consistent with true devotion.

A *National fast* then, is a day set apart by our *temporal rulers*, during a time of national calamity, when all people, of all ranks and denominations, are called upon to repair to church, where we are commanded *devoutly* to put up certain prayers framed for us by our *ecclesiastical rulers*, as best suited to the occasion for which we are called together. This occasion more commonly than any other, is to ask prosperity to our arms, in some contest in which we are engaged with a neighbouring state, or states, our brethren, and fellow-creatures. With minds thus actuated by principles of discord and malignity towards a large portion of mankind, we are called upon to be *devout*. Good God! are we then in a frame of mind
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to be really so? is it possible, *devoutly* to pray that the Almighty, who loves *all* his creatures, will make himself a party in the destruction of any of them; and is it not rather an instance of our arrogance and impiety, than of our *devotion*; nay, is it not even insulting the Divine Majesty to ask it? Can a greater insult be offered him, than to confess with one breath that we are a sinful and wicked people who do not duly observe his laws and his commandments, to express sorrow for our offences, and promise amendment for the future, and then the next moment, to solicit him to assist us in the interruption which we have given to that peace and brotherly affection, in which it ought to be one of our first cares to endeavour to live with all mankind, and which we are guilty of a heinous transgression in having broken.

It may be here said, that the above observations can apply only to wars of aggression,

gression, and it is very true, that we might, with more confidence and less impropriety, hope for God's protection to our arms, supposing us to be engaged in a war that was properly and purely a defensive one; but, alas! I question much whether such an one ever *really* existed in the world; it is seldom that nations come to an open rupture with each other, without grievous faults in some way or other having been committed on both sides, and the catalogue of grievances which either party puts forth upon the commencement of hostilities, is commonly but too just a picture of the aggressions and aggravations of its opponent.

One of the most just causes, probably the only just cause, for taking up arms, is, when an oppressed nation, after having ineffectually tried all pacific means of gaining relief from its oppressors, finds itself at last under the necessity of having

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recourse to arms, to obtain those inalienable rights to which all mankind have an equal claim. A nation engaged in such a warfare might indeed have a rational hope for the divine blessing upon their arms, but it would not require a national fast to obtain it; if the justice of the cause did not bring that blessing upon it, one day's praying to him would not.

But perhaps the occasion for which we are called together, may be a less exceptionable one than that of praying for success to our arms; it may be on occasion of a pestilence, a famine, devastation by earthquakes, or other natural evils, which not being evils of man's own creating, are less improper subjects on which to put up our prayers to God; yet our minds may not be in a state to be truly devout, and our prayers may still be little better than a solemn mockery: If the mind is not trained up to a constant habit of piety,

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can we hope that the Almighty will be pleased with intercessions, which, though perhaps uttered with fervour at the moment, are only uttered in obedience to the command of an earthly power,—ardently breathed forth indeed, but no sooner breathed forth than, together with the subject for which, and the object to whom they were addressed, entirely forgotten. No, no, my friends, a nation truly devout, has no occasion for a national fast, and a nation which is not truly devout cannot be benefited by one; a nation which lives in uniform obedience to God's laws, can make no difference between one day and another, and a nation which lives in opposition to them, does but add to its sins, when it goes through the mockery of once in a year confessing them, without the individuals of which that nation is composed, ever amending their lives.

Yet our rulers tell us, that on the day they have appointed, we *must* be devout, and that we must be devout too, “as we
 “tender the favour of Almighty God, and
 “would avert his wrath and indignation,
 “and upon pain of incurring such punish-
 “ment as they may justly inflict on all
 “such as contemn and neglect the per-
 “formance of so religious and necessary
 “a duty.” They do indeed allow God’s wrath and indignation the first place, but they seem to think their own of scarcely less importance. Have we, as a nation collectively, or as individuals singly, lived ever so scandalous a course of life, have we, as a body, been ever so unjust in our dealings with neighbouring states, or as individuals, with each other, however wide of devotion our course of life may have been, still on that day we *must* be devout, for we are commanded to be so. Have we suffered oppressions to grow in the body politic, which we might have
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cut off in the bud, and do we suffer them to continue, when we might pluck them up by the root ; have we suffered tests to be established which tyrannize over the consciences of a large portion of our brethren and fellow-countrymen, when, instead of ever permitting them to vegetate, we ought to have crushed them in the seed ; and do we suffer such monuments of our shame, to flourish and be inspired with fresh vigour, when it is in our power in one moment to wither and parch them up for ever, so that no traces of our infamy might remain—however in these respects, we may have sinned, and deviated from true devotion, still on the day appointed we *must* be devout, or incur the displeasure of our rulers. Do we see thousands and ten thousands of our fellow-creatures, pining in all the miseries of want and wretchedness, with scarce food sufficient to support life, with scarce cloathing to cover their nakedness, or a
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house to shelter them from the inclemencies of the weather, while we ourselves are rioting in luxuries, hurrying from pleasure to pleasure, inventing new modes of expence, new modes of wasting that invaluable time, for the waste of which we shall one day be called to a strict account, and which, when once lost, can never, never, be recalled—Do we suffer such abuses to go on, nor make the least effort to remedy them—Do we in this manner stray ever so wide from the path of true devotion, still on *that* day we *must* be devout !

My Friends, the picture of misery just delineated (I speak from my own knowledge, from what I myself have seen) is not overcharged. Do you doubt the truth of its existence? Visit those mansions of wretchedness (for so they may *now* most justly be stiled) the habitations of the poor, particularly those in our large manufacturing

turing towns; trace their inhabitants through the various distresses, with which they have struggled for many months past, till you place them at last in the loathsome asylum of a public workhouse, and you will find the picture, alas! only faintly coloured! Let us consider well then, my dear fellow-countrymen, what we are about, when we assemble together upon an occasion like the past; with what face can we implore God's pardon for our sins, and tell him that we repent, while we supinely continue in exactly the same course of life as if we had never once fasted or prayed. If we would really shew our devotion to God, let us earnestly endeavour to reform whatever is amiss in our conduct, either as a nation or as individuals; abridging our luxuries, let us impart what is idly wasted, to alleviate the necessities of our fellow-creatures; let us with one heart, and one voice, unite to restore the blessings of peace to this distracted

tracted country, to banish far from us all evil thoughts, words and actions, and to follow after those things, and those only, which belong to true holiness, and I will venture to affirm, that by these means we shall do much more towards conciliating the favour of the Almighty, than by adoring him *one day*, by appointment, with our lips, while our actions denote that our hearts are far from him.

I have hitherto considered a national fast in a general way, and have endeavoured to shew, that what is termed national fasting, is so far from being a religious act, that it is scarcely ever to be reconciled with true devotion. I now proceed,

THIRDLY, *To consider a fast with particular reference to the late occasion for which we have been called together, and to examine whether the prayers appointed for that solemnity can be devoutly repeated.*

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In the first additional prayer that we find in the morning service, we address the Almighty in humble petition that he would “look down from heaven, and protect us against the declared enemies of all Christian Kings, Princes, and States, the impious and avowed blasphemers of his holy name and word, who in the very centre of Christendom, threaten destruction to Christianity, and desolation to every country where they can erect their bloody standard.” “The *declared* enemies” is an ambiguous term, their real meaning in the use of which, the Right Reverend Bench would have done well more fully to explain: if they mean that the French nation have declared themselves “the enemies of all Christian Kings, Princes, and States,” they would have us approach the Lord with a falshood on our tongues; for I may safely venture to advance that no such declaration has been made either directly, or

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indirectly,

indirectly, on their part. That they are
 “ the declared enemies” of all *despots* is
 true, but *Despots* are NOT *Christian Kings*.*

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* The following letter, which lately appeared on this
 subject in one of the public prints, contains much good
 sense, concisely expressed, and tends farther to shew
 the fallacy of stigmatizing the French nation in the
 manner above alluded to.

To the P R I N T E R.

Norwich, Feb. 18.

READING in the new Form of Prayer for the ensuing
 fast-day, that we are directed to pray—“ That the Lord
 would look down from heaven, and protect us against
 the declared enemies of *all* Christian Kings, Princes, and
 States,” &c. I was led to make the following serious in-
 quiries:—What do our Bishops mean by Christian Princes
 and States? Those who call themselves Christians, or
 those who in the judgment of charity are really and
 truly Christians?

If the former,—Are not the Kings of Denmark and
 Sweden, “ Christian Kings?” Are not the Swiss Can-
 tons “ Christian States?” Do not they who govern in
 the Republic of Genoa, profess themselves to be “ Chris-
 tians?” Will it not be allowed, that the United States of
 America are “ Christians,” though they support no one
 form of religion by penal statutes? I further ask—Does
 the French nation, or even the Convention, wish to over-
 turn all these? Should we not, when we address a right-
 eous God, be cautious lest we defame our neighbour,
 and utter falsehood?

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As we do not suppose, however, that so pious a body of pastors as the Bench of Bishops, would make their flocks guilty of such horrible impiety as to approach the Lord with lying lips, we must suppose that their meaning in calling the French nation the “ declared enemies, &c.” is that they are declared to be so by the nations

If, by “ Christian Kings, Princes and States,” be meant those who are *truly* Christian; who act upon the most obvious and indubitable principles of Christianity—such as these—“ Love thy neighbour as thyself—Do as ye would be done unto—Live in peace, &c. &c.” Where, Mr. Printer, (excepting our most gracious Sovereign) where will you find in the *proper* sense of the word, a “ Christian King or Prince?”

Some maxims early instilled in my mind by my mother, which I cannot eradicate, lead me to doubt, whether the *Pious* Catherine, the *Apostolic* Francis II. the *Righteous* Frederick IV. or even his *Holiness* the Pope, can *bona fide*, in a New Testament sense, be termed, by any honest disciple of Jesus, “ Christian Kings or Princes,” and their governments, Christian States!”

Let me request some grave Casuist to explain this subject a little, that our devotion may be properly directed on the approaching Fast-day.

HONESTUS.

CAMBRIDGE INTELLIGENCER, FEB. 22.

who are now leagued against them, and we will therefore proceed to examine what grounds those nations have for thus stigmatizing them.

Overwhelmed and oppressed by the galling yoke of despotism, the French, in the year 1789, resolved, that the arbitrary will of one man should no longer impose its dictates upon twenty-five millions of his fellow-creatures; they declared themselves free, and from that moment they were so, for *the will of the people* is alone requisite to determine, whether a nation shall be free or not. Yet their ancient attachment to their Monarch, had still so great an influence on their minds, that in the regeneration of the state they reserved to him a respectable share of power, together with an ample revenue. Such was his situation in the new constitution, that there was a fair prospect of his happy reign in the *hearts* of his people, a sway as much
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more glorious to him who possesses it than reigning over their *persons* only, as the mild influence of a tropical sun, is superior to the scorching heat of a volcanic eruption. For a short time affairs presented a most flattering aspect for the new-formed government ; the monarch had sworn to rule by the laws which his people had made through their representatives ; the members of the legislative body, and each individual in the various offices of the state, had sworn to maintain that constitution of which the king was the head ; all former differences were reconciled, and confidence *seemed*, at least, established between the legislative and executive powers. But those bright beams of sun-shine illumed the new creation, alas ! but for a moment ; clouds soon began to gather around, and ascend rapidly in the horizon. The machinations of foreign tyrants, and the violence of domestic parties, the resolutions of the congress at PILNITZ, the
bloody

bloody manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick, the outrageous violence of Jacobin clubs, raised the storm, which at length burst forth on the devoted nation. The flame of republicanism which had been smothering for some time, broke out with irresistible impetuosity, spread instantly over the major part of the nation, and monarchy sunk in the conflagration. The excesses which followed were dreadful: yet those who, with so much warmth, exclaim against the French upon that account, would do well to consider whether their anathemas are not, in the first instance, misdirected; for let me ask, whether the French, who were quietly settling themselves in a free and equal government, or the allies and emigrants who first cruelly interrupted so glorious a work, were the aggressors? Any one who considers the case impartially, must surely allow, that the enormities which have been committed in France, nay indeed throughout

throughout a large portion of Europe, are to be ascribed in their origin, as far as mortals can judge, to the confederacy against France, and not to France herself.

I do not mean to offer these reflections as a justification of the dreadful scenes which have been acted in that country; I offer them only as palliations, and desire to be considered in all that I have said, or shall say upon the subject of french affairs, as speaking of the nation at large, not of any individual. If *Marat* was altogether as wicked as he has been represented, still *Marat* was not the whole nation, and all that I mean to contend for is, that the nation at large is an aggrieved nation, driven by her enemies into the commission of dreadful excesses, which appeared in the hour of heat and passion, requisite to the maintenance of that liberty which she was determined to perish rather than yield, and to which, when her present irritation

ritation has subsided, we may *reasonably*,
yes, reasonably hope, she will look back
 with the deepest regret. That so noble
 a revolution, that the glorious emancipa-
 tion of five and twenty millions of my fel-
 low-creatures from slavery to freedom,
 from wretchedness and depression to the
 knowledge, and to the feeling sense of the
 dignity of human nature, and in one word
 from *brutes* to MEN, should have been ful-
 lied with such crimes, I most sincerely de-
 plore. Yet my heart glowing with the
 sacred flame of liberty, and deploring the
 excesses committed in support of it, can-
 not but look with disgust at the combina-
 tion which has been formed to stop its pro-
 gress; and were I disposed to *execrate* any
 of my fellow-creatures, which, as a Chris-
 tian, I hope I am not disposed to do, or
 to pronounce either side "enemies to
 "Christian Kings, Princes, and States,"
 those sensations would be excited by that
 side which interposed to undermine the
 glorious

glorious fabric of freedom which the French were rearing, and not by the French themselves, who would *quietly* have reared that fabric, had they been permitted. They were not interfering with any other state, and no other state ought to have interfered with them.

The next charge brought against the French nation in the quotation which I have given above, is, that they are the "impious and avowed blasphemers of God's holy name and word," or in other words, I suppose, that they are a nation of atheists. This is a most favourite topic with the adversaries of France, who delight to view every thing against that country in the concave mirror; but how has this charge been supported? by no better authority than the hasty profession of one man, one single individual out of many millions of people; a profession caught up with eagerness, by those whose

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prejudices

prejudices it cherished: the whole convention were therefore instantly decreed atheists, nay, the *piety* of *this* kingdom was so great, that it could not stop here, but proceeded to pronounce the whole nation atheists. So far from uniting in these sentiments, a confirmed atheist seems to me so strange a phænomenon, that I cannot help doubting, if even DUPONT is really so, and suspecting that, if his sentiments upon the subject were closely investigated, it would appear that his profession was the sudden impulse of a heated imagination, not the effect of serious deliberation. The Deity is so stamped on all his works—on every part of the creation we so strongly trace

“ The bright impression of his hand,”

that it appears scarcely possible for any one seriously to contemplate any object that he beholds, and then think it the production of chance alone, nor discern
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the animating spirit of infinite power, wisdom, and benevolence. If DUPONT really be what he professes himself, a confirmed atheist, I pity, from my soul I pity his blindness; but how unjust, how absurd, is it to infer from thence, that the whole nation are so. Good God! a *nation* of atheists!—'tis an anomaly which can only exist in the imagination of that most credulous of all creatures, inveterate prejudice. The heart of man, when uncorrupted by pernicious habits, and evil example, is so far prone to religion, that no instance was ever yet found amongst the most *uninformed* (I do not like the word *savage*) nation of a total want of it. Can it then appear *probable*, that in a nation where enthusiasm has prevailed so much as it has done amongst the majority of the French nation, religion should all on a sudden become totally extinct. That the superstition which reigned there under the appellation of Christianity drove many into

deism, is a fact which cannot be denied ; but this, alas ! is too often the effect of such gross errors upon a mind which reflects at all, but does not carry its researches deep enough ; persons of that description finding their reason shocked at the absurdities which they witness, without waiting to purge away the dross from the ore, are too apt hastily to throw aside both together.

Happily, however, for the cause of true religion, we do not rest upon *probabilities* only, to refute the charge of atheism brought against the French ; their own proceedings and declarations being a full and satisfactory proof of its falshood. The solemn appeal to the Deity which prefaces their last Declaration of Rights, the acknowledgements made in the seventh article of that declaration, of every man's right to the free exercise of religious worship, and the guarantee of that right contained

tained in the hundred and twenty-second article of the constitution, would be alone sufficient to refute the charge; but to these we may also add, that in the Jacobin Club on December 11, 1793, a member rose up, and in the most explicit manner declared his belief in God, which declaration was received with the loudest applauses, and the assembly unanimously exclaimed, " Yes, we all believe in God." * And a not less strong proof than the above, that religion so far from being *discountenanced*, is even *encouraged* in France, and that too in the only way in which religion ought to be encouraged, by promoting perfect freedom of worship, are the following resolutions which were passed in the Convention, on the 6th of December, 1793.

" 1st, The National Convention forbids
 " all violence or menaces against the free-
 " dom of religious worship.

* Courier, December 23, 1793.

" 2d, The

“ 2d, The vigilance of the constituted
 “ authorities, and the activity of the pub-
 “ lic force, shall be exerted to this end,
 “ and shall employ all the means that may
 “ be requisite to give security to the re-
 “ ligious worship of all persuasions.” *

In consequence of these resolutions, the churches of Paris were again opened on the 9th of December for the performance of mass, and were thronged with attendants.

After such repeated proofs of the falshood of the charge, that the French have no religion amongst them, those only can remain unconvinced of their error, who wilfully shut their eyes against conviction. The difference between the former, and the present state of religion in France is, that whereas formerly it was a matter of compulsion, it is now a matter

* Cambridge Intelligencer, December 21, 1793.

of choice ; those who still wish to attend
 mafs, have the power of attending it un-
 molested, but we fhall not fee any more
 thofe overgrown religious institutions
 (falſely ſo called, as they were much more
 frequently ſeminaries of vice) which uſed
 to abound to the ſcourge of ſociety. It
 will not now be the fate of weeping or-
 phans to ſee

“ Their father’s ſtores,
 “ Their ſhrines irradiate or emblaze their floors,”

The Deity will be worſhipped only

“ In ſuch plain roofs as piety can raiſe,
 “ And only vocal with the Maker’s praiſe.”

Or perhaps in ſome places under no roof
 at all but the wide extended canopy of
 Heaven ; but he will be worſhipped with
 more ſincerity, becauſe *voluntarily*, than
 when religion was made the *trade* of a ſet
 of men, to perſecute others into the obſer-
 vance of ceremonies, which themſelves
 were

were the most forward in their hours of privacy to ridicule.

Equally void of foundation with the other charges above examined, is the assertion that they " threaten desolation to " every country where they can erect " their bloody standard;" unless indeed as perhaps may be the case, the Right Reverend Bench considers every country as in a state of desolation, which is not blessed with an absolute monarch, a superb aristocracy, and an overgrown hierarchy, to assist in the destruction of which national blessings, was all that the French ever proposed. I do not mean to defend their system of fraternization, and officious offers of assistance to every nation that wished to be free; that was a mad idea, taken up in the intoxication of the moment, and now I hope relinquished for ever; they have no more business to interfere with the internal concerns of other nations,

nations, than other nations have to interfere in theirs, as themselves indeed acknowledge by the hundred and nineteenth article of the Constitution.

I shall close my remarks upon the first prayer, with observing, that their Lordships, the compilers of it, seem to have abated somewhat of the confidence which they possessed last year, that we are "God's people."—Even *they* are struck with the little claim we have to that appellation, and they now therefore change that assertion into a request, that the Almighty "will direct us to such exertions as may
" manifest us to be under his guidance."
Whether their thus requesting the God of peace and universal love, to make himself a party in the quarrels of mankind, be consistent with true devotion, I leave to those who have attended to this address, to determine.

In the *Litany*, we are presented with a prayer, in which is an acknowledgment, that “ we have been signally blessed in the “ unmolested enjoyment of true religion.” That we have been highly favoured in the means afforded us by the Almighty, of attaining to the knowledge and practice of true religion is undoubtedly true, and for such blessings we cannot be sufficiently thankful. But, to our lasting reproach, how little, alas, have we profited by those — blessings! for can that nation be said to practise true religion, which establishes tests and articles to bind the consciences of mankind, which God created free, and which sets up creeds of human composition above his revealed will? — Did the great founder of our religion, bind up that religion in certain forms and systems, which he commands us to believe? No, he exhorted us all to search the scriptures, for in them *only* is the word of life; he exhorted us to examine his doctrines, whether

whether they were true or not. But the Church of England, "the true religion," as she arrogantly styles herself, tells us, that we must believe in such doctrines as *she* prescribes to our belief, or be damned! Is this to practise true religion? Is this to be really devout? Oh! no, my fellow-countrymen; *devotion* has no part in such a system; *that* can never flourish, till all restraints upon inquiry and opinion are taken off, till the gates of religion are thrown wide open, till it is made a spiritual concern entirely, not a temporal one; till every man inquires for himself, forms opinions for himself, and with the heart, not the lips only, offers up his praises and thanksgivings to the King of Kings; not soliciting him to take a part in our quarrels, not requiring him to extirpate the French nation, nor upbraiding his tardy justice, that he has so long delayed to shower down his vengeance upon them in some signal manner; but with sincerity

and contrition confessing our sins, and reforming our lives, thus endeavouring to render ourselves acceptable in *his* sight, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and who requires nothing of us to fit us for a better life, but the practice of those duties which constitute the only solid happiness on earth.

The next clause in this prayer is perhaps one of the most proper throughout the whole service, for by it we are directed to confess, that we have “ungratefully forsaken the Almighty, the fountain of all true happiness, and sought for it in our own vain and sinful imaginations.”—A lamentable truth! but which perhaps goes farther than was intended; for in no instance can we more truly be said to have sought happiness after our own “*vain and sinful imaginations*,” than when we supposed, that by plunging ourselves in an unjust and ruinous war, we
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were supporting our constitution, and preserving to ourselves the blessings of freedom and prosperity. Is prosperity best supported by devastation, or does freedom flourish best at the mouth of a cannon?

The next confession, that the Lord has "taught us by his *judgments* to feel and "to lament this prevailing sinfulness," throws some light upon a question which certainly stood much in need of elucidation, viz. what is meant by those who assert, that the present war is a *necessary* one. If, on our part, it was necessary, in order to repel the attacks of our enemies, as has been asserted, it cannot possibly be called sinfulness in us to have engaged it; but as it is thus allowed to be *sinfulness*, we must suppose, that those who call it *necessary*, mean it to be so only upon the general doctrine of necessity.

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If the subject were not of the most serious nature, the next occasional prayer would excite one to laughter, as in it the having implored great blessings of the Almighty is made a plea for asking still further favours. In plain English it runs thus.—“ Since we have done thee the favour, O Lord, to ask thy blessing and protection against our enemies, we think thou oughtest, in return for such condescension on our part, to correct whatever is amiss in our conduct, as it is too much trouble for us to undertake such a work ourselves.”—An excellent specimen of devotion and humility!

The last occasional prayer, which follows that for Christ's church militant, opens with a very fine exordium upon our own christian charity, and goes on to pray for the “ repentance and conversion of men who, having cast off their faith in him the living God, and following the vain
“ imaginations

“ immaginations of reprobate minds, have
 “ plunged themselves into those horrible
 “ crimes and impieties which astonish the
 “ christian world.” We *devoutly* pray for
 the repentance and conversion of the
 French nation, while we labour most
 earnestly to retard the time, which alone
 can open a door for these blessings, and
 while our preachers solemnly avow “ their
 “ hope of becoming, in the hands of
 “ Heaven, instruments of vengeance on
 “ the French nation.”* While they are
 harrassed by hosts of enemies from with-
 out, to the number of which we strive
 every day to add, whilst they are torn to
 pieces by intestine divisions, which we fo-
 ment by every means in our power, so
 far are we from allowing them time to re-
 pent of the enormities already committed,
 that we drive them on to still greater. It
 is only by observing a different line of con-
 duct

* See Dr. Beadon, Bishop of Gloucester's Sermon on the
 Fast of last year, preached before the House of Lords.

duct on our part, that we can hope to see a different one on theirs; it is by withdrawing our interference, and leaving them quietly to settle their own government, that we alone can hope to see their eyes opened, to a due consideration of those deeds, which, however atrocious, cannot be corrected till their present irritation is subdued, by the calm of reason and reflection. But whilst they have only to turn from the repulse of one enemy to the repulse of another, and from relieving one besieged city, to relieving another, what can be expected, than that they will continue in their present course. Whilst enemies rage without, the guillotine will rage within, and as long as they are persecuted on all sides, under the mask of christianity, it would scarcely be matter of surprise if the very name of christian became odious in their ears.

But

But perhaps the astonishment of the christian world at the present transactions in France might be somewhat abated, if they would impartially compare them with those which were carried on under the old government of that kingdom. The result of such a comparison surely must be, a candid confession, that however dreadful may have been the sudden massacres, which have taken place at different times, or the deliberate executions which have of late been carried on, such crimes appear *white*, when placed in contrast with the *scarlet* die of those committed under the reign of despotism. For let it be remembered, that even the most violent declaimers against the French nation, have not been able to bring against them the smallest charge of inflicting bodily tortures, or of lingering executions: instant dispatch by the guillotine, the cord, or the musquet, is their manner of wreaking their vengeance: we do not hear, as formerly, of

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wheels,

wheels, racks, beds of steel, and wild horses; of burnings, iron cages, and iron masks; neither do we hear of secret executions, or of victims to the caprice of favourites and mistresses. Let it also be remembered that in *all* the massacres and executions which have taken place since the Revolution, not half the victims have fallen, that formerly in one night, (the fatal St. Bartholomew) were sacrificed to fanaticism and bigotry.

If the murders of a *Marat* or a *Robespierre*, excite so much astonishment, how much more must it be called forth on contemplating the crimes of a CHARLES THE NINTH, or a LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH.*

Or

* The Duke of Sully, in his memoirs, gives the following account of the massacre of Paris in the reign of Charles IX.—“ If I were inclined to increase the general horror, inspired by an action so barbarous as that perpetrated on the 24th of August, I should in this place enlarge on the number, the quality, the virtues, and great talents of those murdered in this horrible day, as well

Or if it should be too much trouble to look back into history in order to contemplate them, more modern times will fur-

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well in Paris, as in every other part of the kingdom. I have writings still in my hands, which would confirm the report of the Court of France, having made the most pressing instances to the neighbouring courts, to follow its example with regard to the Protestants, or at least to refuse an asylum to those unfortunate people.--- But I would, were it in my power, for ever obliterate the memory of a day, that divine vengeance made France groan for, by a continual succession of misfortunes, blood, and horror, during six and twenty years.--- It is with regret that I cannot omit what happened on this occasion to the Prince who is the subject of these Memoirs, and to myself.

“ I was in bed and awakened from sleep, three hours after midnight, by the sound of all the bells, and the confused cries of the populace. My governor St. Julian, with my Valet-de-Chambre, went hastily out to know the cause, and I never afterwards heard more of them; they were, without doubt, amongst the first that were sacrificed to the public fury. I continued alone in my chamber dressing myself, when, in a few minutes, I saw my landlord enter, pale and confused. He was of the reformed religion, and had consented to go to mass, to save his house from being pillaged, and his life from destruction. He came to persuade me to do the same, and to take me with him. I did not follow him, but resolved to try if I could gain the college of Burgundy where I had studied; though the great distance I then was from
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nish matter, of at least, equal astonishment. How many millions have perished in the East-Indies by massacre, and by artificial famine?

the college made the attempt very dangerous! Having disguised myself in a scholar's gown, I put a large prayer book under my arm, and went into the street. I was seized with horror inexpressible, at the sight of the furious murderers, who running from all parts, forced open the houses, and cried—KILL—KILL—MASSACRE THE HUGUENOTS!!! The blood I saw shed before my eyes redoubled my terror. I fell into the midst of a body of guards, they stopped me, interrogated me, and were beginning to use me ill, when, happily for me, the book that I carried was perceived and served me as a passport. Twice after this, I fell into the same danger, from which I extricated myself with the same good fortune.—At last I arrived at the college of Burgundy, where a danger still greater than any I had yet met with awaited me: The porter having twice refused me entrance, I continued standing in the midst of the street, at the mercy of the furious murderers, whose numbers increased every moment, and who were evidently seeking for their prey. I prevailed on the porter to let me in, for a few pieces of money, where two inhuman priests wanted to force me from him, to cut me in pieces, saying the word was, NOT TO SPARE EVEN INFANTS AT THE BREAST!—The King of Navarre was obliged to go to mass; if he had refused he would have been murdered. I was advised to do the same. The King and the Prince of Conde were awakened two hours before day, by armed soldiers, who, rushing into their room, carried them to
King

famine? How many millions have been enslaved, and murdered, on the *African coast*, and in the *West Indies*? Has not a
Russian

King Charles, who immediately commanded them to go to mass, or suffer as criminals and rebels.

“ It was not long before Charles felt the most violent remorse, for the barbarity to which he had given the sanction of his name.—From the evening of the 24th of August, he was observed to groan involuntarily, at the recital of a thousand cruelties practised on that occasion. The number of Protestants murdered, during eight days, over all the kingdom, amounted to SEVENTY THOUSAND! Soon after this Charles IX. died in the most dreadful torments.”

Pope Pius V. was said to be so much affected at this bloody deed, that he wept; but Gregory XIII. who succeeded him, ordered a public thanksgiving to God, for this massacre, to be offered up at Rome, and sent a legate to congratulate Charles IX. and to exhort him to continue it! Charles IX. was so brutal, as himself to fire on the fugitives, from a window in the palace, and to encourage the carnage, by repeatedly crying out—KILL—KILL. The young King's heart was not naturally so base, he soon felt compunction; but his mother, whose heart was made for such designs of blood and murder, induced her son to aid the cruelty she had designed, by his royal sanction. This cursed woman, did not, like her son, feel repentant for thus promoting the honour of the church!

In

Russian Emperor been deposed, imprisoned, suddenly dismissed from the world, while his wife usurped the throne? Has not this very woman, in conjunction with the King of Prussia, and in spite of the most solemn treaties, robbed, divided, and plundered the kingdom of Poland? If the blood be chilled, so as to become less free in its circulation, in reflecting upon the victims which have been sacrificed by the *Atheistical Convention*, it must be altogether stagnated in the veins, when we reflect upon the still greater numbers which have been offered

In addition to this infernal business at Paris, near half a million of Protestants were in the course of the same year, by the instigation of the priests, massacred in different parts of France. So far from truth is it "that the late crimes of the French are unparalleled," that it may be safely asserted, should the French factions proceed even for seven years to come, in that scandalous manner they have for several months past, their crimes will not EQUAL those committed in ONE WEEK by the French priests in the 16th century. This is only one instance out of many, selected from history, but this is sufficient to make us weep over human nature, when corrupted and depraved, by pretended, or rather perverted Christianity!

offered up, at various times, by different *Christian* nations.

I readily acknowledge, that when one reads of fifty, sixty, or perhaps an hundred unfortunate persons in a day, falling a sacrifice to the ferocity of their countrymen, one cannot avoid, one would not wish to avoid, dropping tears of pity and regret. But let every one consider, whilst he is endeavouring to promote the present proceedings against France, whether he is not rendering himself a partaker in the guilt of those whom he so piously execrates. Let him consider well, while he is praying for the conversion and repentance of these "enemies," as they are called, "of all Christian Kings, Princes, and States," whether it would not be equally proper to put up the same prayer in behalf of those "Kings, Princes, and States," themselves; nor would it be at all less proper to pray that, together with those
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of the French nation, the eyes of the allied potentates, “ may be opened, to see
 “ and consider with detestation and terror, the ravages they make amongst
 “ their fellow-creatures”—to see and consider the guilt they are heaping upon their own heads, by instilling into the minds of their followers such a spirit of inveteracy against those with whom they are contending; for it is indeed a melancholy reflection, that though in these times we boast of our superior civilization, yet there never was a contest carried on with a greater spirit of malignity between the contending parties, than the present unfortunate and ruinous one. For the truth of the above assertion, I appeal to the various methods which have been pursued by all descriptions of people in this kingdom, to keep alive, and even to blow up to the highest pitch of fury, the flame which has been kindled against the French nation. The Orator in St. Stephen’s Chapel, the
 Judge

judge on the bench of justice, the divine from his pulpit, the speculatist from his closet, all conspire for the same end; nay, as if all these together were not sufficient to accomplish so *Christian* a purpose, the votary of Melpomene steps forth, and with all the pomp and state of tragedy, endeavours to awaken those feelings of pity and horror, which in a mind not subjugated to reason, his pathetic pen has, perhaps, more power than any other to create. It has been said of the leaders of the French armies, that they intoxicate their men with philters, with potions, before they lead them on to action; if that be true, yet let the leaders of the allied armies ask themselves, whether they do not use even more powerful methods of intoxication, in the inveteracy with which they endeavour to inspire their followers, towards those against whom they are leading them.

On the whole then, I think it clearly appears, that DEVOTION, which in general has little connection with a national fast, is particularly foreign to the late occasion; the prayers appointed for it, so far from breathing the true spirit of christian charity, and humility, are composed in terms of arrogance, ill-suited to the erring judgments of mortals.--- That in them we assume a power of judging our brethren, which borders strongly upon impiety, since that is a power which belongs to the unerring judgment of God alone. If he still patiently endures the French nation, shall man pretend to say, that they ought to be extirpated from the face of the earth? This spirit is strongly reprobated from the highest of all authorities, our blessed master himself, who tells us to "judge not, that we be not judged;" and who rebuked those disciples who would have called down fire from heaven to destroy the village of Samaria,

maria, which refused them entrance.* Nor will any plea of zeal for the honour of God, which it is pretended is affronted by the conduct of the French, *atone* for a want of charity towards our brethren: he most truly honours God, who, to the utmost of his power, imitates his moral perfections, amongst which none has a more exalted rank, than his forbearance towards his offending creatures,—that unbounded benevolence which he exercises towards all mankind.†

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* St. Luke, chap. 9th, 51st, and following verses.

† These sentiments are beautifully enforced in the following PARABLE AGAINST PERSECUTION, written by the late Dr. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN:—

“ And it came to pass, after these things, that Abraham sat in the door of his tent, about the going down of the sun.

“ And behold, a man bent with age, coming from the way of the wilderness, leaning on a staff.

“ And Abraham arose, and met him, and said unto him, Turn in, I pray thee, and wash thy feet, and tarry

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Can we hope then that those prayers will be acceptable to God, which have for their leading features, such bitter denunciations

all night; and thou shalt arise early in the morning, and go on thy way.

“ And the man said, Nay; for I will abide under this tree :

“ But Abraham pressed him; so he turned, and they went into the tent, and Abraham baked unleavened bread, and they did eat.

“ And when Abraham saw that the man blessed not God, he said unto him, Wherefore dost thou not worship the most high God, Creator of heaven and earth ?

“ And the man answered and said, I do not worship thy God, neither do I call upon his name; for I have made to myself a god, which abideth always in my house, and provideth me with all things.

“ And Abraham's zeal was kindled against the man; and he arose and fell upon him, and drove him forth with blows into the wilderness.

“ And God called unto Abraham, saying; Abraham, where is the stranger ?

“ And Abraham answered and said, Lord, he would not worship thee, neither would he call upon thy name; therefore

nunciations against our fellow-creatures? To what an unchristian state of mind must he be reduced, who can earnestly repeat them! I mean not here harshly and unjustly to censure all those who join in the service of the day; I am well aware that very many who attend public worship, do it only as a matter of course, and with no other idea than of performing what they are told is a necessary religious duty, and which they hope, therefore, will be acceptable to God; in such, the only thing censurable is, that they do not duly consider what they are about, which every one ought to do before he engages in any act of religion, and it is with a wish to awaken such well meaning, but not sufficiently

therefore, have I driven him out from before my face into the wilderness.

“ And God said, Have I borne with him these hundred and ninety and eight years, and nourished him, and cloathed him, notwithstanding his rebellion against me; and couldst not thou, who art thyself a sinner, bear with him one night?”

ciently reflecting people to a due sense of the real tendency of such worshippers, that these reflections are offered; I trust that they are not wholly unworthy of consideration—and if they have the beneficial effect of turning the attention of any one to truths of high importance, I shall think myself well rewarded for the time and attention bestowed upon them. For myself I declare, that ever since I have turned my thoughts seriously towards the nature of true devotion, and of the intercourse which it ought to inspire between man and his maker, a *national fast* has appeared to me, instead of an act of devotion, to be a mockery of the divine mercy and goodness, inasmuch as it is generally instituted, for the purpose of imploring the Almighty to assist us in carrying on designs, the most adverse possible to what he can approve, and used as a state engine to make that appear a matter of religion, which in reality is a contest originating

nating from the bad passions of mankind, carried on with rancour and malignity, and which terminates in the dreadful injury; at least, if not in the total ruin, of both the contending parties.

I know that it is said, by way of apology for modern wars, that they are not carried on with that malignity with which wars used to be conducted in former times. So far I allow may be true, that he who points the bayonet, or he who aims the musquet may bear no ill-will individually to the unhappy victim that falls under the tremendous ruin; but never yet was a contest carried on between two nations without a degree of malignity being excited between the collective body of the one, and the collective body of the other. Whence could arise else that contradiction in terms which we hear so often repeated of “natural enemies;” or whence but from the rancour which has been excited by
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the frequent contest between the two nations could have arisen that jealousy of the French Revolution, which so early began to manifest itself in this kingdom. It would have been most natural for Britons who have so long exulted in their own liberty and ridiculed the French as a nation of slaves, to have rejoiced in their emancipation; nor could any thing have checked an honest transport upon so glorious an occasion, but the artificial rivalry which has always been kept up between us, and to which every new war added fresh fuel. I speak not these sentiments from a spirit of censoriousness, but with anguish of heart in the melancholy reflection upon the sentiments, which in consequence of the present contest, as well as of all former ones, I have heard and seen from the mouths and pens of those, who in their own eyes, and in the opinion of the world, are good christians.

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As an exemplification of the truth of what I here advance, (and though similar examples are numerous, I will not fatigue the reader by citing more than this one) I would refer to Mrs. H. More's remarks upon the celebrated speech of *Dupont* above alluded to; a lady who professes herself a zealous christian, whose character is very high in the world as such, and some of whose writings might justly entitle her to that character. In the pamphlet above-mentioned, however, we look in vain for that spirit of candour which must ever be a leading feature in a true christian—suffering prejudice “her safer guides to rule,” we behold her joining the popular cry, and after running a long career of invective against the French nation, closing it with that most absurd of all suppositions, that atheism will become their established profession. Her motive for writing was good, was worthy of a christian—to con-

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tribute towards the relief of a set of men whom I believe to be real objects of our charity*, and who have indeed, to the best of my knowledge, shewn themselves so, by a peaceable and quiet demeanor since they have been in England. But while Mrs. More, by *precept*, recommends one branch of charity, she seems to have forgotten, that almsgiving, though an important branch, is not the only one of that sublime virtue, and gives in herself a sad *example* of the want of another no less important branch, universal candour and benevolence. Why could she not have recommended the distresses of one portion of mankind to the compassion of her fellow-creatures, without in so unchristian a manner endeavouring at the same time to irritate their minds, and inflame their passions, against another, and much larger, portion. But her whole chain of argu-
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*The refugee French Clergy, for whose benefit the pamphlet was published.

ment turns upon the error of attributing to the nation at large the excesses of a few individuals. It is not my intention to enter into a farther review of the pamphlet in question, but I cannot drop the subject without remarking, that while the authorefs compliments so highly the crusade now carrying on, she seems to forget the sentiments which, in a former publication she expressed, with regard to the crusades of ancient days, and of which I will therefore take leave to remind her, as they apply equally well to the one, as to the other, the pretext for both being in a great measure the same—to rescue a portion of country out of the hands of *Infidels*, and to extirpate the *Infidels* themselves:

“ Oh, blind to think

“ That cruel war can please the Prince of Peace !

“ He who erects his altar in the heart,

“ Abhors the sacrifice of human blood,

“ With all the false devotion of that zeal,

“ Which massacres the world he died to save !”

PERCY, A TRAGEDY.

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I am well aware that in offering these reflections to the public, I run the hazard, if I were known, of having the dreadful cry of *Jacobin*, and Republican (epithets, now deemed the most opprobrious that can be bestowed) raised against me, and of being stigmatized as one disaffected to my own country, and pleading the cause of its enemies against it. To such objections I have this short answer to make ; that he is the sincerest lover of his country, who will not flatter its errors at the expence of truth. If fair argument can be offered against what I have advanced, I am open to conviction, but, till convinced by reason and argument, I will not be deterred from delivering my sentiments with as much freedom, when I think my country in the wrong, as when I think it in the right. I love my country, but it is not with that fatal blindness which sees in it ideal perfections which it does not possess, or which supposes it to possess advantages
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to which no other nation can attain. I love my country, but I love the whole human race also, and wish peace, happiness, and true religion to flourish and abound in every nation under heaven. To attain to such a desirable situation is in the power, would to God it were in the will also, of every one; would but each individual singly resolve to enter into a strict and impartial investigation of his own conduct, to reform whatever he finds amiss there, and to conform his future life to the strict and unalterable rules of pure religion, not allowing more latitude to himself than he would to others, what a glorious change should we soon see take place in the world. Inspired then with *true* and *genuine* devotion, we should adore and worship the supreme Lord of all, in spirit and in truth; we should truly love our neighbour as ourselves, and doing unto all as we would they should do unto us, all occasions of contest between one man and another, be-
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tween one state and another, would for ever cease, nor would our rulers find occasion any more to call us together for a NATIONAL FAST.

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